

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

21 December 2000

Projects Reviewed

East Pine Street Substation
Seattle Center Performance Hall
Seattle Center Festival Pavilion

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 1:30pm

Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg
Ralph Cipriani
Jack Mackie
Cary Moon
Donald Royse
Sharon E. Sutton
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Sally MacGregor
Marianne Pulfer

21 Dec 2000 Project: **East Pine Substation**
 Phase: Design Development
 Previous Reviews: 21 May 1998(Conceptual Briefing), 4 March 1999 (Schematics), 21 December 2000 (Design Development)
 Presenter: Mike Blanchette, HDR Engineering
 Donn Hogan, HDR Architecture
 Neal Knapper, Seattle City Light
 Linda Osborn, Osborn Pacific Group
 Paula Rose, Seattle City Light
 Phil Schroeder, Seattle City Light
 Dale West, Seattle City Light

 Attendees Cheryl Cramford, Seattle City Light
 Cynthia Gould Brown, KC Public Arts Program

 Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00006)

Action: The Commission approved the proposed changes and makes the following comments and recommendations:

- supports the change of the West wall location
- is pleased that the team has retained the original lighting scheme but requests that the lighting wattage be reduced as a conservation measure
 - recommending consideration of photovoltaic lighting as alternative;
- concurs that the viewing tower be closed for security reasons but wants it to be retained as a Landmark with the possibility that it be reopened in the future
- supports the reduction of the berm next to the barrier wall to a height that allows removal of the security fence

The design team reported that they had met with members of the community who suggested that more benches be added to the corner of 22nd Avenue and Pine and requested that the tower not be removed. In light of the teams primary concerns for increasing security of the compound and limiting areas conducive to illicit activities the team explained the intended measures. With the extension of the West wall to align with the south end of the west wall the landscaping would be thinned out and more lighting would be provided. Other changes in the landscaping would entail regrading the berm, removing the chain-link fence on the top of the berm, and the planting of scrubs, accent trees and lawn. These plantings in addition to new asphalt in some areas would make the barrier perimeter easier to maintain. .

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Requested clarification as to why the berm was to be reduced.
 - Proponents explained that the measure is intended to reduce illicit activity.
- Inquired as to why there is a fence on the berm.

- Proponents stated that the fence prevented intruders from going onto the wall or up onto the tower and prevented visitors from being able to throw things into the compound.
- Asked for confirmation that with the reduction of the berm the fence would no longer be necessary.
 - Proponents affirmed this conclusion.
- Showed concern that any lighting that was ornamental is reconsidered in relation to conservation issues.
 - Proponents explained that the 250 watt lamps could be replaced with 60 watt lamps
- Asked if the same style of gate would be used for the new gate.
 - Proponents stated that the same style of ironwork would be used.

21 Dec 2000 Project: **Seattle Center Performance Hall**

Phase: Design Development

Previous Reviews: February 19 1998 (Conceptual Briefing), January 20 2000 (Concept Design),
May 18 2000 (Schematic Design),

Presenters: Shelly Yapp, Seattle Center
Virginia Anderson, Seattle Center
Kathryn Gustafson, Gustafson Partners
Mark Reddington, LMN

Attendees: Chris Baxter, LMN
Cynthia Brown, KC Public Art Program
Shirley Chiu, LMN
Beau Fong, Seattle Center
Robert Hull, Miller Hull Partnership
Roy Kim, LMN
Sara Levin, City Budget Office
Peter Locke, LMN
Garreth Loveridge, Gustafson Partners
Patreese Martin, LMN
Jon McNeal, LMN
Shannon Nichol, Gustafson Partners
Wendy Pautz, LMN
Bonnie Pendergrass, Seattle Center
Owen Richards, LMN
Ryan Robinette, LMN
Todd Schwisow, LMN
Steve Tatge, Miller/Hull
Bob Shrosbree, Site Workshop
Rob Widmeyer, LMN

Time: 2 hours (SDC Ref. # 169| DC00150)

Actions: The Commission approves the Design Development and makes the following comments:

- suggests that the bridge over Mercer St. be more integrated with the experience of the rest of the building; and that it be made bolder in capturing the curve of the façade and requests a greater investment in making the bridge a more exciting part of the structure
- appreciates any enhancements of Mercer Street due to the entrance to the Lecture Hall and backstage area
- encourages the animation of the elevations of the fly-loft
- anticipates that the high quality of the acoustics will be preserved
- supports the inclusion of a tree as columnar element to be planted at the North end of the West façade but is concerned about the specific selection of the tree
- requests a full list of Artwork commissioned for the Opera House that indicates how these works are to be accommodated in the new design

Mark Reddington led a tour of the existing Performance Hall and explained the major changes to the auditorium and main entrance. The background of the project was reviewed in light of the need for the design to address the site as a portal to the campus and how it addresses the question regarding the connection between theater and everyday life. The proponents contend that although initially the architecture is prominent the stage must subsequently take over. The juxtaposition of inside and outside is to be enriched by the artwork that exaggerates the layering of the entry zone by the penetration of the scrim panels of the artwork into the lobby. The sense of layering would be enhanced in the interior by the creation of a “red zone” that functions as an interstitial space between the auditorium seating area and the circulation corridors. The development of the promenade along the entry façade is intended to extend the public space of the lobby to the exterior by use of the glass wall and illusionist spatiality created by the shifting lights of the artwork. It is anticipated that by opening up to the surrounding landscape a better transition will be made from the street to the interior.

The primary design moves for the interior space are intended to improve the experience between the audience and the performers. This is to be accomplished by narrowing the seating area to improve sight lines, raising the height of the proscenium, placing the light bridge closer to the ceiling, adding three rows of box seating and by connecting the mezzanine to the upper seating levels.

The plans were presented to explain proposed changes and additions to the existing structure. These included the undulating west wall that sweeps toward Mercer St. and a grand stair that emerges through the ground level up to the level of the orchestra. The Lecture Hall is to be entered through the Mercer St. entrance at the mezzanine level and the lower level is to be used for loading. At stage level the footprint will be increased providing for additional dressing rooms, additional restrooms, an expanded loading area, rehearsal spaces and offices. Accessibility will be improved on all five levels.

The elevations indicated the retention of the pedestrian bridge from the parking structure to the north of the Center over Mercer St. but with a shift on the Center end of the bridge towards the west. New metal cladding of the roof and slit panel sides are intended to contribute to the sense of a “veiled” entry. The materials of the building itself include a variety of luminous surfaces: the west elevation is characterized by openness and transparency achieved with a glass curtain wall, the north elevation combines storefront windows with pre-cast concrete panels.

The basic idea of the artwork planned by Lenny Schwendinger is to emphasize the theatrical attitude of the building and can change with the events. The pattern will be pairs of scrims that are lit by a series of lights mounted above the scrims to create special places for entrances and animate the space as the visitor walks through it. The colored lights are projected upon the scrim and hit the floor. Light that is diminished in intensity goes through to the next scrim and the effect is that you get a series of layers of colored light; the intention is that it works like a three-dimensional Rothko painting. The color sequences may be either highly saturated or subtle as determined (programmed) by the artist.

Virginia Anderson, Seattle Center Director reviewed the history of the Performance Hall; initially as a World’s Fair site, Seattle Center functioned as a compound with a barrier wall whereas the new Master Plan attempts to open up the edges to the public and the neighborhood. Additionally it addresses the issue of exclusivity asking what the building is supposed to say. The proposal for the Performance Hall responds by opening up to Mercer St., pulling the art out of the building with the colored scrim and by creating more green space. Because of the highly esteemed quality of the acoustics the auditorium of the old building was retained instead of completely rebuilding it in an effort to “keep what is good and change the rest.”

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Are concerned that the tree depicted in the elevation looks appropriate for the performance of The Nutcracker, but not for other performances.
 - Proponents stated that the tree was only intended to be columnar and is used to block the flow of movement and create more enclosed space rather than a corridor. A columnar-shaped Magnolia is being sought.
- Asks if it is important to see the source of the light projected onto the scrims
 - Proponents stated that the artist intended the light to be most visible parallel to the scrims.
- Questions if it is necessary to keep the bridge over Mercer St. and if it would be possible to connect it to the canopies. It is not clear how it fits in the sequence of shapes suggesting a shape that extends the curves of the west façade instead of the proposed rectilinear shape.
 - Proponents stated that the bridge is necessary and is retained partly for economic reasons but agrees to reconsider the bridge design.
- Requested a full list of artworks that were specifically commissioned for the Opera House and would like the list to indicate the proposed destinations of the works.
- Thinks that the entrances work well but urges the team to make the streetscape on Mercer St. less like a corridor and more of a place to dwell.
 - Proponents stated that this was difficult to achieve due to space limitations.
- Wonders if it would be possible to include seating in front of the Lecture Hall and an outdoor café
 - Proponents asserted that there will be outdoor café space but it has not yet been drawn in.
- Questions if it is possible to have colored lights projected on the floor as well as on the shirms.
 - Proponents claim that this is intended and where there are other locations at the Center where there is light projected on the ground that the public appreciates it.
- Asks how with all the proposed changes the team intends to preserve the quality of the acoustics.
 - Proponents explain that they have hired an acoustics engineer to advise them on this.
- Is concerned that Seattle Center be more visible on the skyline, particularly from I-5 and suggests the use of a “conductor-cam” on the sky-loft to show the public what is going on inside.

21 DEC 2000 Project: **Seattle Center Festival Pavilion**

Phase: Design Development

Previous Reviews: 7 November 1996 (Scope Briefing), 5 December 1996 (Scope Briefing), 4 September 1997 (Schematics), 20 January 2000 (Schematics II)

Presenters: Robert Hull, Miller Hull Partnership
Steve Tatge, Miller Hull Partnership
Bob Shrosbree, Site Workshop
Ron Rochon, Miller Hull Partnership
Shelly Yapp, Seattle Center

Attendees: Betsey Curran, Seattle Center
Mary Hamilton, Seattle Arts Commission
Beau Fong, Miller Hull Partnership

Time: 1.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 169| DC00152)

Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation with regard to the layering of functions and issues that have to be integrated in the project and makes the following comments and recommendations as the team develops this project:

- **recommends more attention to the exploration of the tension between symmetry and asymmetry in order to find a more purposeful integration of the plaza into the Center and the surrounding area**
- **is supportive of the use of plain finished concrete as opposed to painted concrete**
- **urges the team to be aware of the horticultural legacy of the site and to reinforce it where it is important**
- **asks for clarification of access that corresponds to the “desire-lines” of circulation and asks that wayfinding issues be resolved without resorting to signage**
- **requests that utmost advantage be made of the southeast and southwest corners to make this entry to the Center more visible**
- **appreciates the exciting potential of the restroom structure; asks to see design refinements at the next presentation**

Proponents clarified the basic scheme of the Pavilion by stating that all functions in the existing building will be in the new one except for the elephants. The original plan for the center honored the city grid and this plan does as well at the entrance; however the lower plaza straddles Thomas Street. The area in front of the Pavilion will host a variety of events and the team has tried to simplify this complex area. An open belvedere on the roof of the Pavilion is intended to draw visitors to the edge where events below can be viewed. The only elements that rise up through the building are the two pylons that contain mechanical elements as well as elevators and recycling facilities. This will allow for simultaneous events to take place. A service core is planned to minimize the chaos created between the setting up and removal of events and the entrance to the Center.

A pipe grid system attached to the structural bays of the ceiling will allow for the suspension of direct lighting, general house sound speakers, and ceiling fans. The main space is dividable into two spaces by an operable partition. The front of the building has a series of garage doors that can be entered directly for setting up events. There will be provisions for a curtain when the space needs to be darkened completely that will draw across the front of the space creating a foyer. There will be no cooking facilities in the building however there will be provisions for portable sinks. There will be restrooms on either side of the house with additional restrooms in a separate building outside. From the front of the Children's Theater it will be possible to walk out onto the plaza that drops down to the overlook. The space inside averages twenty feet high. There is a hierarchy of space created in part by a line of columns along the front of the building that establish space for either circulation or for exhibitions. The north elevation features transparent vertical roll-up doors with an industrial character established by thin mullion. Weather allowing, the doors can all be opened so that the whole building will convert to an outdoor space.

An acre and a half of green space on the site will work to knit the paved area and the fountain area. The soft contours and the grading will encourage spontaneous use, small gatherings and festival use. For festival and peak events there is an area for a 32' x 24' stage with a 10' clearance and a paved area for the same sized stage. The graded knolls can be used as viewing areas and are considered part of the stair system. A 12' wide access path is provided for pedestrian circulation and an 18' wide road is provided for trucks. 95% of circulation is handicap accessible. Where the upper plaza meets the grid of the city at Thomas St. there is a grade change at which point one of the pylons is provided with canopies. One of these takes the crowd from the Center House and directs it down to the lower plaza. The canopies provide a highly lit area both for hanging out and hanging banners advertising events.

The surface of the upper plaza will be used to make an overture toward the diverse people who use the building and who view the building from the Space Needle. An attempt was made to find an image that is more universal and does not simply reference the function of the building. 12-inch square pavers considered as pixels are to be used to create the image of concentric circles or raindrops. The tiles will be custom fabricated to maintain their color.

In addition to the Festival Pavilion, auxiliary restrooms will be built to replace some of the toilet facilities removed from the main building. There will be two small building with a steel canopy between them. They are intended to function as beacons and this will be achieved by taking "bites" out of masonry structure and lighting it well from within. The patterning and color of the exterior surface is yet to be determined.

As the artist involved in the project, Deborah Mersky has been asked to address the multi-cultural aspect of the facility; the team and the artist will meet with the Arts Commission in January.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Is concerned how elevator users are going to find them since the most visually prominent elevator tower is not the one that is used by the public.
 - Proponents assert that the elevator in the shaft is for staff use only and a solid gate will indicate that it is not for public access. In the past, visitors coming from the Center House either used the elevators on that side or came down the monolithic stairs.
- Asks about visitors not coming from that direction and how will they know where the elevator is.

- Proponents explained that as one looks across the plaza the end of the pylon is glazed and the elevator should be visible but some signage may be necessary. The elevator will be indicated in the handicapped directories around the campus. Other visitors are encouraged to use the steps and this reflects a bigger issue that entails the encouragement of visitors to use the grounds.
- Is concerned that the architecture is fairly well developed but that the landscape design has not caught up with it. The language of the architecture is not reflected in the landscape and requests the team to make it clear if they intend to repeat that language or negate it. If the team is going to create a new “heart” for the Center then it has to come up with a design with a more intentional relationship between the geometries of the plaza to the north of the Pavilion and the area beyond the site.
- Explains that Seattle Center has historically been a kind of botanical garden where people come to learn about plants and the scheme for the pavilion has to take a position as to honor this tradition or not. Encourages the team to apply the language of flexibility that is evident in the multi-functionality of the plaza to the landscaping.
 - Proponents explain that the big concept is based on the image of concentric circles or “yin and more yin or yin and yang” and the fluid quality of the fountain and asks for confirmation of this as a starting point.
- Questions the reason behind the use of this analogy asking for more commitment because the geometric relationship between the shapes and volumes appear “mushy”.
 - Proponents claim that there is no fixed geometry rather there are positive and negative areas created by the punching-in and rising-up of the fountain. Softness occurs in the green spaces when they are filled with the movement of people. There is not a stylistic statement here rather a quality of the space created by movement.
- Is concerned that the layout is classical in a sense but then it varies and requests that if there is going to be a break made from symmetry, it has to more exaggerated.
- Thinks that if the team is going to do something asymmetrical and more flexible then perhaps the concentric circle analogy shouldn’t be the only idea that is considered.
- Is concerned that if the pattern of the upper plaza is seen from a distance then it will be possible to see how the paths start to come together and then don’t. Asks for a more purposeful integration of the paths and the apron.
- Asks if the building has to be open for people to be able to use the elevator as the Commission had requested at a previous presentation. The concern is that a handicapped person could find himself or herself in a cul-de-sac and not be able to use the elevator and have to travel quite a distance in order to catch up with fellow visitors. Requests that if this is a programming issue the Center should look at the problem and if this is a design issue the architects should look at it.
 - Proponent responds that access is through the building. Proponents claim that three organizations that represent the needs of disabled persons looked at the plan but did not find fault with this particular path. The Proponents agreed to reconsider this.
- Is concerned that the ‘memorial trees’ are respected in addition to the ‘heritage trees’
- Asks that the concrete not be painted as that around the Key Arena.
- Comments that the lower plaza loading area does not have a relationship to anything else on the site plan and should be better integrated into the landscape.